

Department of Public Health
and Human Services

Section:
APPLICATION PROCESSING

TANF CASH ASSISTANCE

Subject:
Interview / Home Visits

Supersedes: TANF 103-2 (07/01/07)

References: ARM 37.78.101, .102, .206, .226 - .228 and .424

GENERAL RULE--Individuals who are applying for TANF cash assistance are required to be interviewed face-to-face. That interview can be conducted in the OPA or at another location that is convenient for the applicant.

**PRIORITY
APPOINTMENTS**

In order to meet the participation requirement and to prevent loss of federal funds, the OPA must attempt to provide a same day interview to all TANF applicants.

If a same day interview is not completed, the OPA must schedule an interview appointment for the applicant and send TEAMS notice A032 "TANF Interview Scheduled" to the applicant. If the OPA offers walk in appointments, the notice may contain generic information outlining the availability of the walk in appointments.

This notice outlines the following information:

1. The requirement to complete a face to face interview;
2. The date and time of the scheduled interview;
3. The requirement for all household members who are required to negotiate a Family Investment Agreement/Employability Plan (FAI/EP) to do so, prior to benefits being authorized for the household; (TANF 701-1 and 701-2); and
4. Benefits in the initial month of application will be pro-rated based on:
 - a. whether or not the household includes individuals who are required to negotiate a FIA/EP;
 - b. which case management entity (WoRC or Tribal NEW) they will be referred to for case management services; and
 - c. the date all household members who are required to negotiate an EP with the WoRC Case Manager have done so, if they are referred to WoRC for case management services. (TANF 103-5)

**INITIAL
INTERVIEW**

At the initial interview, a Family Investment Agreement (FIA) should be negotiated for work eligible individuals who are required to participate in employment and training activities. The applicant(s) must be advised of their rights and responsibilities related to work participation and outlined on the FIA. Both the OPA case manager and applicant must sign the FIA. The applicant must be immediately referred to WoRC or Tribal NEW for case management services.

If the individual is referred to WoRC, the individual must be informed that:

1. TANF benefits cannot be authorized until they have negotiated an Employability Plan (EP) with WoRC; and
2. TANF benefits will be pro-rated in the initial month of application based on the date that all household members who are work eligible individuals have negotiated an Employability Plan with the WoRC Case Manager. (TANF 103-5)

NOTE: The FIA/EP (manual and TEAMS) have been updated to contain this information.

WoRC Offices must schedule an appointment with the applicant within three (3) working days of the referral from the OPA. This initial appointment will be used to provide orientation and to negotiate the initial Employability Plan (EP) with the individual(s). The WoRC Case Manager must review the employment and training participation and verification requirements outlined in the WoRC Employability Plan section of the FIA/EP with the applicant. Both the WoRC Case Manager and applicant must sign the EP. (See TANF 801-3 for information on Extended Benefit cases.)

**PARTICIPATION
INFORMATION
PAMPHLET AND
NOTICE**

All applicants must be informed of the requirement to immediately participate in allowable work activities, even if they have not negotiated a FIA or EP and even if the financial eligibility determination is not yet completed pending other verifications, etc.

TANF Participation Information Pamphlet: All TANF cash assistance applicants must be given a TANF Participation Information Pamphlet (HCS-710) at the time they turn in the application. The HCS-710 provides a list of possible participation activities that the participant can work on between the date of application and the date of the appointment and a participation calendar that explains the required number of participation hours for single and two parent households. It also provides an example for completing the calendar.

NOTE: The HCS-710 must be explained to the applicant at the time it is given to them. It will need to be provided for each household member who is required to participate in employment and training activities.

The A034 TANF Participation Information notice which mimics the HCS-710 booklet must be sent off TEAMS when a TANF application is registered. This notice is to be sent regardless of current case status.

INTERVIEW

The face-to-face interview will set the tone for the applicant's relationship with the Eligibility Case Manager and other county staff. Communication focuses on the expectation the individual is responsible and accountable and stresses the **temporary** nature of TANF cash assistance.

Interviewing includes securing specific information about the family's needs and circumstances. The applicant will be instructed to provide verification of specific financial and non financial eligibility criteria (e.g., wage stubs, birth certificates, divorce decree, etc.), and is allowed a maximum of **30** days following the application date to provide information and obtain requested verification unless there are extenuating circumstances.

NOTE: **OPA offices cannot require a completed application prior to scheduling an interview.** An interview may be scheduled without an application being completed. An interview **must** be scheduled when the front page of the application is received in the OPA.

During the interview, the Eligibility Case Manager will:

1. Provide information about available community resources;
2. Provide information about benefits and services of the various public assistance programs;
3. Provide information about Family Violence Option (HCS-174 Universal Notification of the TANF Family Violence Option);
4. Explain the individual's rights and responsibilities and complete the assessment of the individual's status regarding probation/parole violations, fleeing felon, or convicted drug felon (TANF 103-3). The form HCS-220, "Rights and Responsibilities" may be used for this purpose but the applicant is not required to sign the form;

5. Explain the purpose of Form HCS-101, "Authorization to Release Information". Because an individual cannot waive another adult's right to confidentiality, each adult household member should be given the opportunity to review and sign the HCS-101;

NOTE: If the applicant(s) does not want to sign the HCS-101, continue with the eligibility determination. Document TEAMS Case Notes (CANO) that he/she was given the opportunity, refused and intend to provide all necessary information without assistance.

6. Provide information about the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC);
7. Inform the individual that his/her records are subject to computer matching;
8. Explain that TANF cash assistance is a time-limited program;
9. Explain that cooperation with Third Party Liability (TPL), the Health Insurance Premium Payment System (HIPPS), Program Compliance and Child Support Enforcement (CSE) are basic eligibility requirements, in addition to the requirement to accept and maintain employment;
- ▶ 10. Explain the available benefits of the TANF cash assistance program, including supportive services;
- ▶ 11. Explain the specific program requirement to negotiate a Family Investment Agreement/Employability Plan; to participate in allowable work activities and to provide verification and documentation of participation in allowable work activities;
- ▶ 12. Explain the consequences for non-compliance in allowable work activities, the sanction penalties and the requirement for an individual who has been sanctioned at least twice since January 1, 2008, to participate in an intensive case management meeting as an eligibility requirement; and
13. Complete Form HCS-100 "Out of State TANF Benefit Verification Request" requesting declaration of possible states or Tribes any adult may have received TANF in since 1996. (TANF 801-1)

The Eligibility Case Manager's opening statements should establish the employment focus of TANF and allow the applicant to state the family's needs. If an applicant is presently working or has a job offer, information must be given about other community resources which may meet the

family's need(s) thus possibly diverting them from programs with time-limited benefits.

HOME VISITS

In rare instances; home visits can be made to facilitate the eligibility determination for those individuals who are not able to travel to the local office and do not have someone acting as their authorized representative. A home visit, for eligibility determination purposes, should be made during regular working hours and **prior arrangements must be made** with the applicant/participant. There will be no violation of privacy, personal dignity, harassment or violation of the individual's civil rights. The Eligibility Case Manager will not enter the home by force or search the home.

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